

The American **Record Guide**

VOLUME 23, NO. 8 • 35 CENTS PER COPY • MAY, 1957

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23rd
YEAR OF
PUBLICATION

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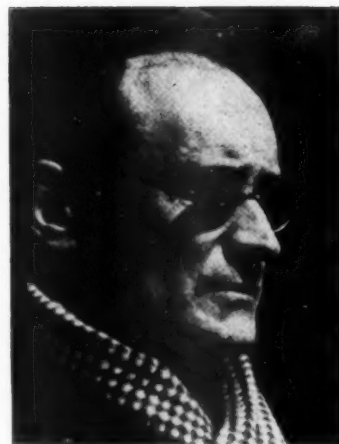
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The Complete Works of Webern

By ABRAHAM SKULSKY



COLUMBIA'S making available the total output of Anton Webern in a set comprising eight LP sides is nothing less than a major musical and phonographic event. In fact, it seems almost unbelievable that one of our big recording companies should have ventured such an undertaking in the behalf of a composer who, notwithstanding his stature, still is quite unknown to the mass audience. It will take many, many sales of *My Fair Lady* to amortize this altruism.

Just why Webern should be difficult to "sell" can be understood by sampling any of his less than three dozen works. This music is so different from anything else that it simply does not fit into those patterns of program-making that determine our concert fare and hence shape our listening tastes. Consequently, it is not heard. What is not heard is not known. And so, twelve years after his death, Webern remains a musician's composer, and at that he is esteemed only by that group among the younger generation of composers who subscribe to the twelve-tone doctrines. Columbia therefore has performed an incalculable service to living musical history by introducing an important contemporary to the world at large. Moreover, his extraordinary *corpus* is set forth under the best possible conditions.

Robert Craft, who was the guiding spirit of this project, has written an excellent study of Webern and his works. This, plus all texts and their translations, are included with the boxed discs. The brochure will be especially invaluable to any who are not too familiar with the com-

poser—a group which contains many otherwise knowledgeable music lovers and, as indicated, no small number of musicians. I am happy to say that Craft's views are not so narrow-minded as those of some other commentators (I am thinking now of René Leibowitz) who see only the twelve-tone aspect of Webern's music and choose to neglect others which, in my own view at least, are more significant.

While it is true that Webern was Schönberg's disciple, and that one can follow the same progression from atonality to dodecaphony in the younger man's writing, their creative personalities were dissimilar from the very beginning. In Webern's music the originality derives from a new expressive dimension and not from any atonal or twelve-tone aspect, and by "dimension" I mean the relationship between the totality of structural elements and the elapsed time in which they evolve. I mean, in other words, a new *spatial* aspect, arrived at by the compression of music's basic components to their strictest essentiality. Webern gives us a sort of microscopic view of music and its workings. He makes sound itself a structural element, like pitch and rhythm. Every note acquires the importance generally reserved for an entire phrase, so that the most minute musical ideas unfold continuously as metamorphosing *sonic* material.

This explains Webern's fascination with, and his orchestration of, the *Ricercar* from *The Musical Offering*. That is to say, his distinctive sound becomes a kind of superstructure on top of the Bach

original. As to his own works, the new time-sound dimension can be perceived from the *Op. 1* onward, and it can be regarded as a constant in contrast to the contrapuntal material that proceeds from tonality to atonality to twelve-tone style in a way admittedly somewhat parallel to that of Schönberg.

I brought up the name of Webern some years ago in a conversation with Stravinsky, who at once likened him to the painter Paul Klee. Both stressed the smallest shapes and forms. Not to labor the analogy, I would say that Webern's goal of maximum audibility—his supreme concern with structure *vis-à-vis* sound—represents the great missing link in the development of music in our time.

Most of the "name" composers do not create new materials, really. As to structural organization they mostly rely on old models. Webern, however, starts out by presenting a new form altogether, and then simply chooses the tonal language that seems to fit. His ten-minute *Passacaglia, Op. 1*, for instance, might be said to reflect a conflict between Webern's steeping in (late) Romanticism and his quest for the essentials of music. Also, by the way, it is the last of his works in which such a conflict is apparent. His characteristic purity, logic, and invention were in the ascendant thereafter. As an

WEBERN: *Passacaglia* (for orchestra), *Op. 1*; *Entflicht auf leichten Kähnen* (for mixed chorus), *Op. 2*; *Five Songs, Op. 3* and *Five Songs, Op. 4* (for soprano); *Five Movements for String Quartet, Op. 5*; *Six Pieces* (for orchestra), *Op. 6*; *Four Pieces* (for violin and piano), *Op. 7*; *Two Songs* (for medium voice), *Op. 8*; *Six Bagatelles* (for string quartet), *Op. 9*; *Five Pieces* (for orchestra), *Op. 10*; *Three Small Pieces* (for cello and piano), *Op. 11*; *Four Songs, Op. 13* (for soprano); *Six Songs* (for high soprano), *Op. 14*; *Five Sacred Songs* (for high soprano), *Op. 15*; *Five Canons on Latin Texts* (for soprano, clarinet,

and bass clarinet), *Op. 16*; *Three Traditional Rhymes* (for soprano), *Op. 17*; *Three Songs* (for soprano, E-flat clarinet, and guitar), *Op. 18*; *Two Songs* (for vocal quartet and instruments), *Op. 19*; *String Trio, Op. 20*; *Symphony* (for chamber orchestra), *Op. 21*; *Quartet* (for clarinet, tenor saxophone, violin, and piano), *Op. 22*; *Three Songs* (for soprano), *Op. 23*; *Concerto* (for instrumental ensemble), *Op. 24*; *Three Songs* (for soprano), *Op. 25*; *Das Augenlicht* (for mixed chorus and orchestra), *Op. 26*; *Variations for Piano, Op. 27*; *String Quartet, Op. 28*; *Cantata No. 1* (for soprano solo, mixed

chorus, and orchestra), *Op. 29*; *Variations for Orchestra, Op. 30*; *Cantata No. 2* (for soprano and bass solo, mixed chorus, and orchestra), *Op. 31*; *Orchestration of Ricercar* from J. S. Bach's *The Musical Offering* (1935; no opus number); *Quintet for String Quartet and Piano* (1906; no opus number; edited by Jacques Louis Monod); *Grace-Lynne Martin* and *Marni Nixon* (sopranos), *Richard Robinson* (tenor), *Charles Scharbach* (bass), various solo instrumentalists and ensembles conducted by Robert Craft. Columbia set K4L-232 (four discs, not available singly), \$23.98.

example, take his *Six Pieces, Op. 6*. This work undoubtedly owes something to Schönberg's *Five Pieces, Op. 16* of about the same period, but it is striking for its continuous disclosure of new sound combinations that anticipate Varèse and all the other *avant-garde* experimenters.

I will refrain from detailed consideration of Webern's stylistic evolution because Craft has covered this perfectly in his essay. One point I must stress, however, is that whenever the composer embraced Schönberg's twelve-tone system both his reasons and his results were different. Schönberg arrived at his method through a need to simplify overburdened harmonic and contrapuntal materials, and what ensued was a new Classicism. But Webern had arrived at something like this long before; when he adopted the Schönbergian system it was because he sought materials for his already worked-out structures. What then ensued was not simplification but complication. This can be discerned in his first twelve-tone works (*Opp. 17-20*). It was only when Webern succeeded in splitting the twelve-tone atom that he arrived anew at purity—specifically, in his *Symphony, Op. 21*. From then forward, more and more vistas open up until we encounter the profoundly poetic beauty of the last Cantatas and the *Variations for Orchestra*.

Here I may venture a revolutionary statement. To wit: On the surface, Webern decidedly may be compared with Schönberg, but in overall spirit there are even more similarities between Webern and Stravinsky. The latter's concern with sound in all its aspects was evident even at the outset of his long career. Both conceive of this element as structural. And we find many new dimensions in the Stravinsky catalogue—his *L'histoire* being an example of a new theatrical dimension, just to pick one at random. Also, his concern with new forms is to be seen in every work from the *Symphony in Three Movements* onward, and there is

always the same drive towards purity of expression. Thus it is little wonder that Stravinsky, in adopting the serial method of composition, does so in the sense that Webern did and not in the spirit of Schönberg or Berg. And consider, too, the importance of silence in both Stravinsky and Webern. This is an element of music which had lost its meaning with the last string quartets of Beethoven.

In sum, the adventuresome will be vastly rewarded by exploring these discs. A word of caution: Play them where and when there will be no other demands on the attention. Do not precede or follow them with music by other composers. The auditory concentration will be repaid. And finally, either skip the early *Quintet for String Quartet and Piano* or regard it as a curiosity, which it is. Heard in tandem with any other Webern work it quickly destroys the spell.

The list of performers who contributed to this miraculous enterprise is too extensive to be put down in its entirety. But let me say that the approach of everyone involved obviously is born of musical integrity and dedication. It would be pointless to discuss the performances individually because Craft himself—in a special note—singles out whatever mistakes were made by this or that instrumentalist. What could a reviewer add to this novel advance warning?

The reproductive quality throughout is excellent, although volume levels are not always the same. But then, one is not likely to play the set straight through.

The "novel advance warning" mentioned by our welcome guest contributor is excerpted in the adjoining column. Mr. Skulsky is widely known for his detailed analyses of unfamiliar scores, many of which have appeared in *Musical America*. He is now completing a book on contemporary opera that will be published by the Oxford University Press.

From the Postscript by Robert Craft:

"The recordings were made in Hollywood, California, between February 1954 and May 1956, the majority of them during 1954. The musicians involved in the project, and myself especially, experienced in those two years a profound growth in sensitivity to Webern's language, and a corresponding growth in technique. Thus when we came to the *Variations for Orchestra*, one of the last pieces recorded, we were able to achieve what I think is our best performance in about one hour of rehearsal and one hour of recording. . . The public does not realize to what extent conventional records are pieced together from hundreds of scraps of tapes. There have been inserts in our performances, to be sure, but none at all, I think, in *Opera 14-19*, the most difficult music. . . These are true performances—readings without breaks. Mistakes are inevitable in such a procedure (though I think there are only three in this group; one wrong octave in the clarinet, the first note of *Op. 18, No. 2*, the other a wrong octave in the guitar harmonic of *Op. 18, No. 3*, last note of bar 4; the only other error of this sort in the whole album is in the viola part of *Op. 9, No. 5*: two wrong notes in bars 6-7, an error which we recognized at the time but for no known reason neglected to edit out). Nevertheless, performance gives a quality of excitement that compensates for much. A great deal could be said of the problems. . . of the final agony of time, when three works have to be recorded in three hours and you must do a masterpiece such as the *Concerto, Op. 24* in a few minutes and so play it straight through and produce your worst performance. Still, many of the performances may be a long time unbettered. . ."

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THE AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE, formerly *The American Music Lover*, is an independent journal of opinion. It is published on or before the tenth of the dated month. Price 35c a copy.

• Year's subscription in the U.S.A. and Canada, \$3.50. Pan-American republics, \$3.75. All other foreign countries, \$4.00.

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• Change of address notification must be received at least a month prior to date of publication. No responsibility can be assumed for non-delivery due to removal without notice.

• Second-class mail privileges authorized at New York, N. Y., with additional entry at Easton, Pa.

• Mail Address: Post Office Box 319, Radio City Station, New York 19, N. Y.

Cover caricature by Olga Naoumoff Koussevitzky



Prototypes and Progress—More “Archives”

By PHILIP L. MILLER

IT IS HARDLY NEWS that the Deutsche Grammophon (Decca) Archive Series has laid out for it the most comprehensive repertory plans of any historical anthology yet attempted. The idea of such a history in sound goes back at least to 1930, when Dr. Curt Sachs, then Curator of the Staatliche Instrumentensammlung in Berlin, compiled for Parlophon his *Two Thousand Years of Music*. With that set (still available on LP) recorded music as an aid to musicology and pedagogy came of age. Dr. Sachs had taken his cue from the Riemann and Schering volumes of musical history in examples; he was able to bring this history to life in a new way, to make it understandable even to those who could not make much of the scores collected by Riemann and Schering.

But those were the days of time-space limitations, and Dr. Sachs had to confine himself to twelve double-sided ten-inch discs. So that he was more than happy when, after his move to Paris, he had the opportunity to carry the idea further. The result of his new labors was *L'Anthologie Sonore*, which set itself no limits except the close of the eighteenth century. As is well known, the *Anthologie* has provided the answers to many a historian's prayer, and some outstanding performances in the bargain. As originally issued the program was more or less haphazard, dictated perhaps by the availability of the right performers for the right musical examples. As we have them on LP today the groupings are more logical, but of course the sonic qualities of the recordings have varied with the years, and in many cases the music has been as well or better performed elsewhere.

Mention should be made also of Percy Scholes' *Columbia History of Music*, issued in the thirties in five ten-inch albums. Unlike Dr. Sachs, Scholes covered the whole field from plainsong to twelve-tone and quarter-tone moderns, but he was not above cutting scores to fit the records, or presenting vocal music in translations. His series today belongs definitely to the past, especially as it has not been transplanted to LP.

A more modern development of the

With the accompanying article and the reviews elsewhere in this issue Mr. Miller begins his twenty-third year on the "ARG" masthead. He has been a valued contributor since Volume I, Number I—it was The American Music Lover then—back in May of 1935.

idea is to be found in the set entitled *Masterpieces of Music Before 1750* after the like-named book compiled by Carl Parrish and John F. Ohl. The anthology is particularly remarkable in its effort to avoid wherever possible the well-known examples, rather to emphasize the broad possibilities of selection. Wider in its scope, and more ambitiously careful in its planning, is HMV's (RCA Victor's) *History of Music in Sound*, designed as a companion to *The New Oxford History of Music*, a monumental but still uncompleted work.

The scheme of the Archive Series differs widely from all these. On the huge catalog card that accompanies each factory-sealed disc is a schedule of twelve research periods, each with its appropriate subdivisions. The brief introduction appearing also on all of these cards disavows any limitations as to the number of releases that may fit into these classifications. The anthology thus can grow until that unlikely day when the recordable material is exhausted; on the other hand, there is never any pressing necessity for adding to it except under the most favorable conditions. The portions thus served us are far more generous than any we have had before—whole discs, for example, devoted to Adam Krieger, Frescobaldi and other such. The previously mentioned catalog cards are models of completeness in documentation. Not only are we told whose edition of the music is used, who (if his name is known) wrote the text, what instruments and voices take part in the recording and where it was made, but even the duration of each selection! The descriptive notes are signed by well-known authorities, and in this latest batch of releases a large textbook with English translations has been added where appropriate. Generally, the sponsors have been true to their claim that the works are performed “in their complete authentic form based on the original versions” (though one remembers an earlier release in which Orff's modernization of Monteverdi was unwisely used) and to an almost incredible extent we have the music “in ‘living’ interpretations by highly qualified specialist performers”. Also, the sound quality is admirable, and surfaces are quiet.

The new release consists of twelve discs, one for each research period. Beginning with Gregorian Chant, the Choir of Monks of the Benedictine Abbey of St. Martin, Beuron, under Dr. Maurus Pfaff, presents the Good Friday liturgy. This is the

third Gregorian recording made for this series by the same choir—the Abbey at Beuron is known as one of the centers of learning on this often misunderstood music and it is notable not only for the authority of the singing but for its churchly atmosphere (ARC-3050). The second disc, representing *The Central Middle Ages*, combines one side of *Troubadours, Trouvères and Minnesingers* with *organa* of the Notre Dame School, one by Perotin and one by Leonin. The artists, who sing their delightful group of “Chansons et Motets” with such relish that one could believe this period was their one specialty, are the members of Safford Cape's Pro Musica Antiqua of Brussels. As for the *organa* (one double, one triple) they are given incomparably the best performance of this type of music that I have ever heard (ARC-3051).

Period III is *The Early Renaissance*, represented by six motets of John Dunstable and five chansons by Johannes Okeghem, also sung by the Pro Musica Antiqua. Neither composer has been so fully represented on discs before. There are many lovely things about the program, notably the quietly reserved treatment of Dunstable's almost homophonic *Quam pulchra es*. Some question arises, on checking available printed scores, about syllabification. Cape apparently has his own answers to the problems; certainly there is no question the effect is good (ARC-3052).

Orlando Gibbons, as he so well deserves, is given a disc to himself in honor of *The High Renaissance*. The program of anthems, madrigals and fantasies is presented by the Deller Consort and a Consort of Viols of the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis. Particularly appealing is the third anthem, *This is the Record of John*, as it is done here. The gravely serious madrigal *What is our life?*—an impressive refutation of the theory that fine poetry does not make good texts for music—is a work that will repay repeated study. I do not find myself in agreement with the tempo here adopted for *The Silver Swan*—I like it to move more—but there is little else with which I can find fault. The priceless setting of *The Cries of London* is a long work, but it does not wear out its welcome. Deller's little passage, “Breat and meate for a prisoner of the Marshalray, for Christ Jesus' sake, breathe and meate”, is touching indeed (ARC-3053).

The Italian Siecento brings us a set of toccatas by Frescobaldi, six well played on a sweet-voiced sixteenth century organ by Eduard Muller, and five on a 1695 harpsichord by Fritz Neumeyer (ARC-3053).

Passing to *German Baroque Music* we encounter for the first time on records the “Arien” of Adam Krieger, one of the pioneers of the German lied. The composer, who was also his own poet, wrote strophic songs with instrumental ritornelli not unrelated to Buxtehude. The

admirable singers are Margot Guillaume, soprano, Hans-Peter Egel, boy alto, Johannes Feyerabend, tenor, and Fritz Harlan, baritone. Particularly charming is the duet for soprano and alto (ARC-3055).

Marin Marais and the great Francois Couperin share the disc devoted to *Western Europe from 1650 to 1750*, the former with a suite for viols, the latter by his 8th Ordre for harpsichord. August Wenzinger is the principal gambist of the first; Fritz Neumeyer plays the second. Wenzinger's handling of his difficult instrument is notably smooth and agile (ARC-3056).

In presenting Boccherini for *The Italian Settecento* the sponsors have chosen a Cello Concerto in D, Op. 34 (not the Boccherini Concerto) and a delightful quintet for guitar and strings in E minor (Op. 50, No. 3) which is not to be confused with the similar work recorded by Rey de la Torre and the Stuyvesant Quartet. The concerto is played by the versatile Mr. Wenzinger; the quintet features the guitar of Fritz Worschung (ARC-3057).

Two solo cantatas, Nos. 56 and 82, representing the works of Bach, appear in this series as a repeat performance. Some years ago this recording by Dietrich

Fischer-Dieskau with the Ristenpart Kammerorchester was given a regular release by Decca. It seems a pity that the performances could not have been re-done, for the fine artist now has grown beyond his achievement here. I am sure he would no longer feel the necessity of transposing several low G's up an octave, and I suspect he would be careful to breathe more quietly. Still, this must remain the preferred recording of the *Kreuzstab* Cantata, though in *Ich habe genug* the baritone does not efface memories of Hans Hotter (ARC-3058).

Fine performances of the complete *Fireworks Music* (in its third version), two oboe concertos, and the *Concerto Grosso, Op. 3 No. 3, in G*, do honor to Handel. Hermann Tödtcher is the oboist, the late Fritz Lehmann and Carl Gorvin the conductors (ARC-3059).

The disc for *The German Pre-Classics* is a real novelty. Its eleven amusing songs are the work of Valentin Rathgeber and Johann Caspar Seyfert. Rathgeber was a Benedictine musician at Banz in Franconia in the seventeenth century who used to make himself welcome at banquets with his knack for composing and singing little secular songs. At one point in his life the monastic regimen seems to have

proved too much for him, for he took himself off and was absent for several years. Only his extraordinary talents saved him from severe punishment on his return. Seyfert was the Protestant director of music at Augsburg. The singers, headed by Margot Guillaume, fully appreciate the humor of these lieder (ARC-3060).

Finally and appropriately we have Mozart to stand for *Mannheim and Vienna*. Miss Guillaume, Lotte Wolf-Matthäus, Helmut Krebs, Fritz Wunderlich and Hans Günter Nöcker, with Fritz Neumeyer at the piano (a genuine eighteenth-century grand) give us twelve songs and two comic ensembles, including two songs missing from both the Schwarzkopf and Felbermayer Mozart song recordings. It is good to hear a variety of voices in the lieder—*An Chloe* comes very well from a tenor, and *Warnung*, though written in the bass clef, turns up for the first time in my experience sung by a bass. Wolf-Matthäus makes less of a caricature of *Die Alte* than does Schwarzkopf. Perhaps the loveliest song of all, *Abendempfindung*, is beautifully sung by Guillaume. The *Bundle-Trio* ends the program on a note of humor. Throughout, the tone of the old piano adds a special touch of color to the fine program.

Organ Music, Mostly Toccatas, From All Over

Toccatas for Organ: *Toccata from Fifth Organ Symphony* (Widor); *Carillon de Westminster* (Vierne); *Tu es Petrus*; *Carillon sortie* (Mulet); *Suite Gothique* (Boëllman); *Cortège funèbre* (Roget); *Marche de fête* (Büsser); Robert Owen (organ). Westminster XWN-18363, \$3.98.

▲AS can be seen from the above listing, this is a collection of very loud and quite exciting organ music. The title is a bit misleading, however. Only the Widor, the Vierne, the Mulet, and the finale of the Boëllman can strictly be called "toccatas". This form usually consists of a fast-running and persistent rhythmic figuration over a "walking" melody. Be that as it may, many organ lovers will be happy to see a complete *Suite Gothique*, especially since it is quite well performed. The *Prière* (the one calm moment on the record) is especially well done, with all the appropriate lushness. But you may get the feeling that, in the very fast passages, Owen's fingers are cheating ever so slightly. The Skinner organ used here is located at Christ's Church in Bronxville, New York. At least for me it is marred, as are so many large Skinners, by a set of overpowering pedal tones which growl and rumble rather than sing. However, I feel that this fault is much more serious in Baroque music than in Romantic and later display pieces such as these. The sound from Westminster is fine.

—D. H. M.

Organ Music of Spain and Portugal:

Partite sopra la aria della folia de Spagna (Pasquini); *Dic nobis, Maria* (Cabezón); *Toccata in D Minor* (Seixas); *Fantasia in D Minor* (Carreira); *Toccata in D Minor* (Jacinto); *Fantasia primi toni* (de Santa Maria); *Paso en do major* (Casanovas); *La Romanesca con cinque mutanze* (Valente); *Allegro in D Major* (Carvalho); *Verse de 8º toni per do-sol-re* (da Cruz); *Tiento lleno por B cuadrado* (Cabanilles); *Toccata in C Major, Allegro—Adagio—Minuete* (Seixas); *Three Toccatas* (Seixas); E. Power Biggs (organ). Columbia KL-5167, \$5.98.

▲THIS is another in the Biggs "Panorama of Historic Organs" series, and it certainly is one of the most interesting. Spanish organs are unique in that they have no pedals—or at best a rudimentary form called "mushrooms"—and are equipped with horizontal trumpet stops of a most amazingly penetrating quality. Biggs gives us the sound of seven organs in all. The first three selections are played on one of the three organs in the Toledo Cathedral, an instrument built in 1801. It has an exciting tone with a handsome set of trumpet stops used to great advantage in the Seixas *Toccata*. The instrument at the University of Coimbra (1733), used in the Carreira and Jacinto selections, is more akin to the small French organs in mellowness of tone. Biggs plays the music of de Santa

Maria and Casanovas on a contemporary organ at the Cathedral of El Pilar in Zaragoza, Spain, and for the first time we hear deep, rich pedal tones as well as those distinctive trumpet stops. Next, we move to Madrid, where we hear an organ which combines Baroque reeds with Spanish trumpets—a very effective combination in the Valente selection as well as in the Carvalho. This organ is located at the Royal Palace and was built in 1778. The da Cruz and Cabanilles compositions, which are short but most interesting, move us back to Zaragoza, this time to an instrument in the Cathedral of La Seo constructed in 1860. Its trumpets are the most beautiful of all; they have a richness which blends with the reedy quality of the instrument proper. The organ at the Church of the Incarnation in Lisbon is used for the most extended selection on this disc, the Seixas *Toccata in C*. It sounds quite ordinary after the unusual ones preceding, but it has a pleasant mellow quality. The Monastery at Marfa has no less than six organs, although most are in bad repair. The one used, built in 1807, is in fine condition, however, for the *Three Toccatas* of Seixas. It has a mellow, clarinetish quality. All the short pieces, ranging from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, are well suited to these types of organs, and the Biggs performances are smooth and full of vitality. The album is no mere oddity; it is an absorbing study of most unusual and thrilling musical sounds. The excellent, illustrated notes are by Biggs himself. Columbia's recording is exceptionally fine. —D.H.M.

Record Reviews

THERE IS IN SOULS a sympathy with sounds, and as the mind is pitched the ear is pleased with melting airs or martial, brisk or grave; some chord in unison with what we hear is touched within us, and the heart replies.

—William Cowper

BACH: *English Suites* (complete); John Kirkpatrick (harpsichord). Decca Archive ARC-3068, -3069, -3070, \$5.98 each.

Borovsky (piano).....Vox PL-7852
Valenti.....West. 18384/5

▲AFTER hearing these recordings you may sit back, as I was tempted to do, and wonder why anyone ever bothered to invent the piano! If you think of the harpsichord as a rather dull and inflexible instrument with somewhat of a monochromatic tone color, you are due for a rude awakening. Kirkpatrick's instrument is not a large modern one with huge organ-like bass tones such as the one used by Sylvia Marlowe, for instance. But this is all to the good, I feel: Kirkpatrick's instrument produces a clarity of texture which many of the larger ones lack. Furthermore, its tones range from muted to brilliant ones, from light and airy sounds to those of compelling richness. Kirkpatrick is an artist capable of taking full advantage of this variety of registrations, and he does so in these pieces with excellent taste. I feel that these performances achieve a distinction nearly equal to Landowska's *Well-Tempered Clavier*. Kirkpatrick's style seems to be different in one major respect: he is, if possible, metrically somewhat freer and more Romantic in his conception of Baroque music. This is especially evident in the Sarabandes, which are among the high points of this music. His flexibility is not carried to excess, however, and all contrapuntal lines are distinct and properly spaced. The recording is, fortunately, nearly all that could be desired.

—D.H.M.

BACH: *Unaccompanied Partitas and Sonatas*; Nathan Milstein (violin). Capitol set PCR-8370, \$11.94.

Heifetz.....Victor LM-6105

▲"RIGHT" is the word that applies here, in the sense that Plato's perfect forms are "right", or Michelangelo's last taps on the chisel. In these Partitas and Sonatas Bach created form and shape out of the void in a manner which touches one with a sense of the mystical. The laws of an art are hard things to pin down, at best,

but there can be no doubt in anyone's mind, once they have experienced these works, that in them the laws of music are realized in as pure a state as they are likely to be, anywhere or anytime.

The spectacle we are treated to in this instance—and a spectacle it is—is that of a performer who meets the rightness of Bach's achievement with an unerring rightness of his own: the clearest imaginable vision of what is going on in the music; the capacity to see the long objective without losing a single detail in the foreground; a command of the instrument which equals Bach's command of the medium. Milstein handles music the way Churchill handles prose—the perfect inflection here, the right emphasis there—done with an artistry that is instinctive and deep. The difference is that Churchill probably has an easier time of it, for no mere words could behave as intractably as the notes of these sonatas are apt to, and no English sentence could pose the problems of interpretation which these Bach phrases abound in.

The *D minor Chaconne*—"stupendous", as Karl Geiringer calls it in his excellent essay accompanying the album—leaves the listener exhausted but the performer apparently unruffled. Yet for all his heroic skill, Milstein does not stand away from the music in proud detachment. He is there every measure of the way, and the presence of the man is felt behind the glowing facility of the artist. —S.F.

BACH: *Suite No. 3 in D; Suite No. 4 in D*; Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam conducted by Eduard Van Beinum. Epic LC-3332, \$3.98.

Scherchen.....Westminster XWN-18013

▲BEINUM is not noted for warmth of interpretation, and these performances constitute a case in point. His approach is dignified, strong, and almost without a trace of flexibility and grace: if ever a conductor lived who is the antithesis of Stokowski in his approach to Bach, here he is. But these are far from "dead" renditions. Beinum brings to the two pieces an integrity and clarity which give an uplifting quality to the music, make it quite exciting. Also, the Concert-

gebouw is an orchestra virtually incapable of producing a really bad performance, regardless of conductor, because of the sheer golden quality of its ensemble. Wonderful, too, are Amsterdam's solo instrumentalists. Of the competitive performances, Scherchen and Münchinger are not exactly warm either. Epic's recording is superb. —D.H.M.

BARTÓK: *Concerto for Orchestra*; L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande conducted by Ernest Ansermet. London LL-1632, \$3.98.

Ormandy, Phila.....Columbia ML-4973
Reiner, Chicago.....Victor LM-1934

▲ANSERMET exhibits a respectable, academic understanding of this great work, but little more. His strongest competition comes from Ormandy and Reiner, who not only head orchestras of far superior mettle but, both being of Hungarian origin, possess a natural flair for this music. Except for the third movement (*Elegia*), Ansermet's reading of the score's colorations and harmonic blendings seems synthetic and tentative. The rich sustained melody (played by the cello and basses at the outset of the introduction), is pale when compared to the rich sonority here obtained by Ormandy and Reiner who, unlike Ansermet, have carefully balanced the details of the masterpiece without sacrificing the totality. My impression that the Swiss conductor's performance was little more than a run-through was strengthened by the absence of any humor in the second movement (*Giucco Delle Coppie*). Rather dullish horn playing here too. With the *Elegia*, Ansermet's playing suddenly takes on real depth and meaning. Phrases are woven together with élan and style. But insight ends there, for the *Interrotto* is wanting in humor and contrast. The disparity in technical resources between the American and European ensembles becomes most apparent in the Finale. The reproduction is satisfying to the ear, but the orchestral timbre is rather whitish. My copy had considerable surface noise.

—A.K.

BEETHOVEN: *Sonata No. 30 in E, Op. 109; Sonata No. 32 in C minor, Op. 111*; Victor Schioler (piano). Capitol P-18046, \$3.98.

Schnabel.....Victor LCT-1110, -1109
Backhaus.....London LL-266, -953

▲SCHIOLER is a pupil of Schnabel and, judging from these performances, some of the master's style has rubbed off onto this Danish artist. With both, emphasis is placed on the pathos and introspection of this music. Schioler does inject his own concepts in what seems to me a most effective way. For instance, his tempi are if anything slower than Schnabel's. Also, he seems to use even more rubato, and also he separates many of the phrases with ever so slight pauses—

truly a "lingering" style. I have long felt that the nature of Beethoven's final keyboard works justifies such an approach and therefore find these performances among the most satisfying to be had. Schioler displays an ease and fluidity of execution, and his tone, recorded to a fare-thee-well by Capitol's engineers, is wonderfully controlled and shaded. Especially fine are the final pages of the *Op. 111*. This is truly heavenly music, and Schioler brings to it a maturity and depth of understanding rarely encountered plus a golden tone of great sensitivity. It is certainly not too much to hope that Capitol will record more Schioler-Beethoven, and your reviewer, for one, looks forward to it.

—D.H.M.

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 7 in A, Op. 92*; Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York conducted by Arturo Toscanini. RCA Camden CAL-325, \$1.98.

▲ALTHOUGH the recording is twenty-one years old, Victor has managed to preserve the sound of the old Philharmonic quite faithfully. This is a performance of stirring conviction. It made history when new, and has since stood as a model for all to come. At \$1.98, a steal. No competition is listed because there is none at this price (or perhaps at any other).

—A.K.

BERLIOZ: *Overtures—Roman Carnival, The Corsair, Rob Roy*; Philharmonic Promenade Orchestra conducted by Sir Adrian Boult. Westminster W-LAB-7051, \$7.50.

Beecham, Royal Phil. Columbia ML-5064
Wolff, Paris Con. London LL-1297
Schuechter, Philh. M-G-M E-3115

▲IN line with the current revival of interest in Berlioz, Westminster has released this first in a series that will present his complete overtures. The disc includes our first recording of *Rob Roy*.

Although *Rob Roy* is dated 1832, it was sketched (if not completed) at the time of Berlioz' first trip to Italy. It shares in the amazing originality so characteristic of his work and contains thematic material that was later worked into the scores of both *Harold in Italy* and the *Symphonic fantastique*. Certainly *Rob Roy* is underserving of the neglect it has received since its première. It shares this record with the popular, if not (relatively) overdone *Corsair* and *Roman Carnival*.

Sir Adrian and the "Philharmonic Promenade" (a pseudonym for a famous London orchestra) have turned in mature and well conceived performances but the real bonus value of this record is the sound. Westminster's Laboratory issues offer some of the finest reproduction to be had. Here it is brilliant, spacious, and utterly transparent. In addition, the dynamic range is just short of miraculous. For a Berlioz score, with its thematic and rhythmic complications and its dynamic

scope, recording of this caliber is meat, potatoes, and gravy. For the audiophile, Berlioz addict, or just plain music lover, this record has a lot to offer. —T.S.M.

BOCCHERINI: *Cello Concerto in C; Symphony in C*; **CAMBINI:** *Sinfonia Concertante No. 1 in C for Oboe, Bassoon and Orchestra*; Jean Decroos (cello), Laila Storch (oboe), Robert Cole (bassoon) with the Orchestra Accademia dell'Orso conducted by Newell Jenkins. Period SPL-732, \$4.98.

▲THIS gem of a record is one of a group of three recorded by Newell Jenkins with an Italian orchestra. The Boccherini *Symphony in C* with solo guitar is a thoroughly delightful work, beautifully orchestrated, with long, flowing melodies. The guitar, featured throughout, lends a peculiar, wistful tone to the whole. The manuscript is in the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra in Paris. It dates from the 1790's and is quite uncharacteristic of the familiar Boccherini. The *Cello Concerto in C*, one of four works in this form by the composer, is also a first recording. An earlier release of the *D major Cello Concerto* came as a surprise to those who were familiar with the *B flat Cello Concerto* (actually by Grutzmacher). Here again we have a genuine Boccherini score, one that is in the Hirsch Collection in London. We are in Mr. Jenkins' debt for rediscovering this interesting material. The remaining work, a *Sinfonia Concertante* by Giovanni Giuseppe Cambini (1746-1825), is one of some 29 works in this form. The present score is in the famous Stelfeld Collection of Antwerp, purchased a few years ago by the University of Michigan. This treasure from the pen of a minor Italian composer is most welcome, especially when played with the spirit and zest that these instrumentalists bring.

The sound is well-balanced and clean, with excellent delineation of the solo instruments. A most highly recommended release. However, the annotations are so inadequate that this reviewer had to call Mr. Jenkins, who supplied the information about his source materials. —R.R.

BOCCHERINI: *Quintets—A major, Op. 28; Allegretto, Op. 10, No. 5; F major, Op. 41, No. 2; Il Ballo Tedesco, Op. 29, No. 6* (Album 1). *D major, Op. 11, No. 6; major, Op. 40, No. 4; Grave in D minor, Op. 41; Largo in A minor from Op. 10, No. 1; Minuet in A major from Op. 13, No. 5* (Album 2). Quintetto Boccherini. Angel Library Series, 45006 and 45007, \$3.98 each.

▲THE emergence of Boccherini's chamber music from long obscurity into the warm light of public favor is no longer news, and the reason for this renaissance becomes less of a mystery with each new release. These quintets suggest that the "bouncy Boccherini" concept as little accounts for the man as the "Papa"

does for Haydn, and though lovers of chamber music probably have realized this for some time, still the discovery of such a lively imagination and occasionally very serious spirit strikes one with fresh surprise. True, Boccherini will edge up to a new key and pounce on it with the subtlety of a beagle seizing a rabbit; he will sometimes forget that he is writing for five instruments instead of four or even two. But such simplicities are offset by the absorbing harmonies of, say, the third movement of *Op. 28*, or the genuine thoughtfulness and dignity of the *Grave in D Minor*.

It is a pleasure, too, to recognize the greater concern with part-writing and contrasting voices shown in the 1778 Quintet (*Op. 41, No. 2*) over the *Op. 28* of nine years earlier. In fact, a fine case for Boccherini's growing skill in the techniques of quintet writing could be built on the evidence of these two works, if the apple cart were not upset before it is fairly on the road by the fact that one of the most appealing quintets of all—*Op. 11, No. 6*, "The Bird Sanctuary"—was written eight years before even the *Op. 28*. Away with chronological development, then, and as the birds twitter in the high violins let Vivaldi look the other way.

The Quintetto Boccherini came into being because one of its number discovered and bought, in Paris, a complete collection of the first and, in most cases, only edition of the composer's 150-odd quintets. A lucky buy for all of us, for the Quintetto performs with a superb tone and a fitting spirit; their dynamics are wonderfully flexible and resilient. The remaining four albums of Angel's proposed six cannot appear too soon.

—S.F.

BRAHMS: *Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel, Op. 24; Waltzes, Op. 39*; Leon Fleisher (piano). Epic LC-3331, \$3.98.

Malcuzyński. Angel 35349

▲FLEISHER'S most powerful competition in the *Op. 24* comes from Malcuzyński. Stylistically, to be sure, they are poles apart. The older artist employs darker hues and a generally more somber approach. His Brahms is full of sustained lyricism and warmth; Fleisher's way is objectively Classic and incisive. This is not to say that there aren't moments of melting *dolci* in Fleisher's exposition, or moments of detached precision in Malcuzyński's, but by and large the styles are as noted. I cannot say that I have a preference, for both are valid and beautifully presented with conviction. I find Fleisher's approach a bit dry in Variation 3, but delightfully sensitive in Variations 1, 5, 11, 18, and 21 especially. He boasts a fine grasp of the rhythmic architecture in the complex 25th Variation. Technically, Variation 14 proves to be a bit rough going at that tempo, but Variations 7 and 8 are dazzling in their articulation. The music

box quality of No. 22 and the gypsy flavor of No. 13 are charmingly caught. Although performed with quicksilver adroitness, Fleisher's staccato approach in Classical style is hardly apt for the *Op. 39* Waltzes. There is more to these gems than he discloses. —A.K.

●
BRITTEN: *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*; Philharmonic Promenade Orchestra conducted by Sir Adrian Boult. Westminster XWN-18372, \$3.98.

BRITTEN: *Same*; **DOHNANYI:** *Variations on a Nursery Song*; Victor Aller (piano, in the latter) and the Concert Arts Symphony Orchestra conducted by Felix Slatkin. Capitol P-8373, \$3.98.

▲TWO new recordings of the *Young Person's Guide*, and both have much to

recommend them. Felix Slatkin's is one of the finest recent orchestral recordings. The definition of the various instruments is most realistic, as is the balance. Sir Adrian Boult's reading (the album is entitled *Hi-Fi in the Making*) consists of a rehearsal session on one side and the finished product on the reverse. The conductor narrates the text that Eric Crozier wrote for the film, *The Instruments of the Orchestra*. The rehearsal side is interesting in shedding light on the mechanics of recording and the relationship between the conductor, recording director and engineers. How this will bear up after repeated hearings, though, is another matter. In any event, the performance is excellent in every way, and the conductor's voice is most natural and unaffected. The sound is perhaps not as startlingly

realistic here as it is in Capitol's version. On the overside of Slatkin's performance we have a lilting, spirited reading of Ernő Dohnányi's *Variations on a Nursery Song*, with Victor Aller as the piano soloist. Not since the composer's own recording many years ago has there been quite as effective a version as this. Here the combination of realistic recording, a sympathetic conductor, a pianist with a big, full-bodied tone, and a virtuoso orchestra make for thrilling listening experience. Altogether the choice between these two issues must boil down to a matter of economy vs. novelty. By "economy" I mean of course a coupling, and the fact is that several good ones are available. If economy is no factor at all, wait for Westminster's narrator-less "Lab" version. —R.R.

CAMPOS: *50 Danzas puertorriquenas*; Jesús María Sanromá (piano). Balseiro set BLE-3000, 4 discs, \$19.92.

▲MIDWAY in May (the 12th or the 16th, depending on your authority) it will be a hundred years since the birth of Juan Morel Campos, most celebrated of all Puerto Rican composers. Since the first Casals Festival in our hemisphere will have just then made San Juan the temporary capital of the music world, it is only fitting that we take this rare opportunity to make some amends as regards the general neglect of America's southernmost creative master—a distinction undiminished by the fact that he died (in 1896) two years before his homeland became our sunniest extremity.

In a show of acumen that should be the envy of his northern competitors, entrepreneur Juan Ramón Balseiro has anticipated this fortuitous centenary with a limited edition of characteristic *danzas puertorriquenas* by Campos played to utter perfection by the one pianist who may be said to own them—and whose participation in the Festival programs will have impressed many a *turista* to whom the name of Sanromá may not have meant much before. Indeed, one of the by-products of the international gala undoubtedly will be some extra prestige for this modest family man whose superior artistry never has been properly exploited by the concert managements. One looks forward eagerly to Columbia's eventual coverage of the San Juan repertory *à la* Prades.

Notwithstanding that happy prospect it is a real pleasure to welcome the present issue, the contents of which Sanromá recorded in Columbia's New York studios earlier this year. The four discs (all to be available singly in due course) will bring particular joy to those collectors who have cherished RCA Victor's old ten-inch shellac album M-849. As far as I know that was the only 78 r.p.m. representation of Campos in any domestic catalogue. In all the spawn of LP there has been but a single

release heretofore, and that one (RCA Victor LSM-2) was manufactured solely for export. Presumably, then, the Balseiro sampling will be *terra incognita* to a great many listeners.

The genus *danza puertorriquena* was baptized by a Spanish Benedictine in the late 1700s. At that time it seems to have been a tap dance—rapid and raucous. This form later became known as the *sonduro*, while the Puerto Rican *danza* as we know it today began to evolve in the middle 1800s. Its genesis can be traced to Cuba, whence a group of émigrés had come with the *aupa* (better known today in essentially its original state as the *merengue*). This dance gave a certain voluptuous quality—or "life", hence its name—to simple melodies in 2/4 time. The first eight bars were prefatory, while the second eight were repeated *ad libitum* to provide maximum freedom of movement. Subsequently this binary form was supplanted by a more refined *danza puertorriquena* in three parts, each extended to sixteen bars but each still quite danceable. And then it became customary to precede the dance with an eight-bar prelude, which was repeated; to this the island's rich would promenade around their ballrooms before joining in the dance proper (and very, very proper it was by this time). A dominant seventh preparatory chord at the end of the introduction was the signal to embrace one's partner.

As art music there were to be two distinct types of *danza puertorriquena*. The one is notable for its sentimentally sweet melody and languorous rhythm. The other has more sharply delineated rhythmic patterns and a certain frolicsome air. Both were "true expressions of the grace of the civilized tropic", as A. A. Rodríguez once put it in a valuable essay. In any event it was Campos who made the *danza puertorriquena* the marvelous fusion of indigenous culture and personal expression that it is. Every humor and sentiment is to be found in these miniature

masterworks. The melodic line inevitably suggests a sort of "song without words", and the inherent rhythmic variety dispels any encroachment of the monotony that threatens so many of the more rigid folk forms.

Sanromá—the redoubtable "Chu-Chu" so tenderly remembered by Bostonians for his many years of yeoman duty under Koussevitzky—plays these pieces with caressing care and, when necessary, with all the considerable aplomb for which he is famous. Himself a Puerto Rican by birth and now a resident there between tours, he was clearly the ideal choice for this assignment and it is a wonder to me that one or another of the allegedly astute "major" labels did not sign him for a similar project long since.

Indeed, perhaps the most incredible thing about this release is the implicit reminder that Sanromá has been virtually absent from the recording studios for nearly a decade. Consider. We have had one miserable Albéniz *Iberia* after another—he plays it wonderfully. We have had one dull Stravinsky *Capriccio* after another—no one can touch him in this knuckle-breaker. No recently recorded performance of the Ravel Concerto will quite do—he gave the American première. The Hindemith Concerto never has been recorded—if memory serves that work was written for him. And for all this his *Rhapsody in Blue* remains incomparably the best one ever put on records. The crushing irony is that the last-listed of these he made as a member of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, which is to say that he has not realized a nickel in solo fees on it. *Ars longa* and all that, but in sum this situation reflects neither honor nor horse sense upon the industry. —J.L.

Those who are unable to acquire the Campos set through the usual trade channels may write directly to Casa Balseiro, Inc., 204 San José Street, San Juan, P. R., for the name and address of the dealer nearest them who handles this label.

CHOPIN: *Études, Op. 10; Allegro de Concert in A, Op. 46;* Claudio Arrau (piano). Angel 35413, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

▲NO one need be told that Chopin's *Études* are not merely tuneful finger exercises, that they contain every interpretative and projective problem that a pianist is likely to meet in the Romantic literature. Often all three hurdles must be met in a single work. Arrau seems to fare best in the more tranquil ones (Nos. 3, 6, 7, and 11) where, with sensitivity and subdued feeling, he can spin a lyric phrase to best advantage. His playing tends to become forced and technically detached when projecting on a larger scale (No. 9), or else dry and colorless (No. 4). The "Revolutionary" *Étude* (No. 12) is wanting in crescendo, drama and brilliance. Arrau exhibits a curious habit of pausing between phrases, particularly in No. 5, which otherwise would be charmingly executed. His tempi are well chosen except for No. 9, which is played rather leisurely for the marked *Allegro molto agitato*, and No. 10, marked *Vivace assai* (92 to the dotted half note). The *Allegro de Concert*, which fills out the second side, is given an interpretation of considerable persuasion. First-class recording. —A.K.

CHOPIN: *Sonata No. 2, in B flat minor, Op. 35; Impromptu No. 1 in A flat, Op. 29; Nocturne No. 8 in D flat, Op. 27, No. 2; Étude No. 5 in G flat, Op. 10, No. 5 ("Black Key"); Mazurka No. 45 in A minor, Op. 67, No. 4; Scherzo No. 3 in C sharp minor, Op. 39;* Byron Janis (piano). RCA Victor LM-2019, \$3.98.

(Sonata)

Rubinstein.....Victor LVT-1042
Novaes.....Vox PL-7360

▲AS a virtuoso Janis is certainly no slouch; as an interpreter he is powerful and dramatic here and has original but sensible ideas. He runs into competition most notably from the performances listed above, but his version of the *Sonata* seems to me to partake of the vigor and drama of Rubinstein and the lyric sensitivity of Novaes. His tempi are on the fast side but never to the detriment of phrasing or tone. For a pianist not yet in his thirties he shows an unusual depth of insight, and his youthfulness if anything adds a freshness to his style. Of course he does not have the authoritative magnificence of conception which often characterizes the performances of a Rubinstein, but such ripeness comes to most great pianists only when their interpretations have been thoroughly digested in years of thought and work. Janis shows every indication of becoming such an artist, in my opinion. He displays skill, style, and that elusive quality of spontaneity which is reserved for only the finest talents. The *Scherzo*, which is a tough nut to crack for even the best artists, is played with imagination and conviction. Fine sound. —D.H.M.

CORNELIUS: *Der Barbier von Bagdad;* Elisabeth Schwarzkopf (Margiana); Grace Hoffman (Bostana); Gerhard Unger (Baba Mustapha); Nicolai Gedda (Nureddin); Oskar Czerwenka (Abdul Hassan); Hermann Prey (Calif); Eberhard Wächter (1st Muezzin); August Jaresch (2nd Muezzin); Rudolf Christ (3rd Muezzin); Philharmonia Orchestra and Chorus conducted by Erich Leinsdorf. Angel set 3553, 2 discs, \$10.96 or \$6.96.

▲THIS little comedy, first performed under Liszt's direction at Weimar, 15 December 1858, was the occasion of such unfriendly demonstrations that the conductor resigned his post. It was not given again in the composer's lifetime. First heard in this country in 1890, it lasted two Metropolitan seasons. In 1925 the presence in the company of Paul Bender, a famous Abdul Hassan, was occasion for a revival, but despite a strong cast and an alluring coupling with Ravel's *L'Heure Espagnole* (starring Bori) it had only five performances. At the time of the first production the critic W. J. Henderson expressed the opinion that "Cornelius' music will bear further hearing and, if we are not mistaken, will grow in favor". On hearing the opera again thirty-five years later, however, he pronounced it a "hopeless bore." It would seem that he was wrong both times. Surely the work will bear further hearing, and now is our chance. In no sense spectacular, the opera still is rich in detail. Perhaps its humor was not, indeed, broad enough for the vast spaces of the Metropolitan. A few of the individual numbers are quite justly famous—the canonic trio in the second act, the love duet that follows it, above all the wonderful ending —*Salaam Aleikum*. This performance quite properly goes in for lightness and charm rather than volume and sonority. Only the voice of Czerwenka has any roughness in it, and he, to be in character, must bellow a bit. The superbly written ensembles come off happily as done here, and, to pick a detail, the prayer of the Muezzins is quite delightful. I would like the finale slowed up a little to make a more positive ending; otherwise I have no quarrel with Leinsdorf. Since there are two overtures—the original one and the one Liszt insisted on to make the opera more Wagnerian—both are included. The first is in its proper place, the second added as a sort of appendix in a separate band on the final record side. —P.L.M.

FAURE: *Sonata, Op. 13; VITALI:* *Chaconne;* CASTELNUOVO-TEDESCO: *The Lark;* Jascha Heifetz (violin) with Brooks Smith (piano), Emanuel Bay (piano), and Richard Ellsasser (organ). RCA Victor LM-2074, \$3.98.

(Faure)

Francescatti and Casadesus....Columbia ML-5049
▲WE have heard the *Chaconne* from many others, but only Heifetz attains the

tonal magnificence and technical mastery that leave one awestruck and dazed. It is readily understandable that Heifetz chose this work (here played in Respighi's transcription for organ accompaniment and enlarged violin part) to open his American debut recital in 1917. Were this all that the record offered it would still be worth its weight in gold. The fill-out on this side is Castelnuovo-Tedesco's *The Lark*, another Heifetz specialty played in this LP premiere with tone as pure as crystal. Needless to say, it is an ideal coupling. The overside *Sonata* of Fauré is executed with cool perfection and clarity. However, my taste in this music tends toward the Gallic suavity of Francescatti and Casadesus. Brooks Smith, who accompanies in the French work, seems a mite timid and in awe (well he might be!) of his companion. Emanuel Bay (*The Lark*) and Richard Ellsasser (*Vitali*) are ideal. Fine engineering. —A.K.

FRESCOBALDI: *Three Gaillards; Partita 12 sopra l'Aria di Ruggiero; Canzona Seconda; Partita 6 sopra l'Aria di Follia; Canzona Quarta; Four Correnti; Canzona Prima; Partita 11 sopra l'Aria di Monicha;* Paul Wolfe (harpsichord). Experiences Anonymes EA-0022, \$4.98.

▲HERE a superb collection of harpsichord music by Girolamo Frescobaldi is presented by a gifted young harpsichordist. He uses a Pleyel instrument with a brilliant tone and his choice of registers is most admirable. Most of the selections seem to be new to records. One, the second of the three *Gaillards*, is familiar from Leopold Stokowski's orchestral transcription, recorded some years ago on 78 rpm. The *Partita 12 sopra l'Aria di Ruggiero*, a series of variations on a popular seventeenth-century theme, was recorded recently by Sylvia Marlowe in her recital of music by Frescobaldi and Domenico Scarlatti (Capitol P-8336). Each performance may be recommended. The other *Partitas* in the Wolfe recital are no less attractive. All too little is currently available by this great Italian innovator, so any new record is awaited with anticipation, especially if it is as attractively programmed and presented as this one is.

In his notes on the record sleeve, Wolfe quotes extensively from the prefaces of Frescobaldi's published works concerning the rules for performing his music. This makes most interesting reading in the light of these performances. The reproduction is excellent in every way. —R.R.

GRIEG: *Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 16; Peer Gynt Suites Nos. 1 and 2;* Yuri Boukoff (piano) and the Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of London conducted by Artur Rodzinski. Westminster XWN-18231, \$3.98.

Rubinstein Victor LM-2087
Lipatti Columbia ML-4525
▲**BOUKOFF** is a young Bulgarian pianist who has concertized widely in Europe. He gives a vital reading of the familiar Grieg Concerto, and receives excellent support from Artur Rodzinski and the "Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of London" as well as the recording engineers. His numerous teachers—Yves Nat, Georges Enesco, Edwin Fischer and Marguerite Long—each have left a mark on this young man, for he has a flashy technique, a singing tone and an insight into the music. This, his first Westminster record (he has a few releases on Epic), is an unqualified success. It is perhaps unfortunate that there are so many excellent versions of this work on the market today, especially those of Lipatti, Gieseking, Rubinstein, Novaes and Curzon, for this new version may get lost among such giants. In all fairness, Boukoff's version stands on its own in such company. The two *Peer Gynt Suites*, previously released as one of the Laboratory Series, make a welcome reappearance in this considerably less expensive garb. Rodzinski's fresh approach is clearly revealed in the transparent and spacious recording. —R.R.

HAYDN: *Symphony No. 101 in D* ("Clock"); *Symphony No. 104 in D* ("London"); Pro Musica Symphony of Vienna conducted by Jascha Horenstein. Vox PL-9330, \$4.98.

("Clock")
Woldike, Vienna St. Op. Vanguard 492
Toscanini, N.B.C. Victor LM-1038
("London")
Woldike, Vienna St. Op. Vanguard 493
Szell, Cleveland. Epic LC-3196
▲**AS** usual, Horenstein's performances are marked by a high degree of musical thought, if not the greatest insight. His tempi tend to plod a little in the Finale of the "Clock" Symphony (marked *Vivace*) and throughout the later work. The former lacks the frantic propulsion of Toscanini, but it is also wanting in some of the excitement that the latter brings to it. It borders on the too lyric. To Horenstein's credit is a gem-like "clock" movement. The corresponding section on the reverse side also is a model of grace. The reproduction is rather edgy in string tone. —A.K.

HOVHANESS: *Saint Vartan Symphony*, Op. 80; M-G-M Chamber Orchestra conducted by Carlos Surinach. M-G-M E-3453, \$3.98.

▲**TO** call this work a "symphony" is certainly stretching the point, for it is far removed in every way from the conventional sonata-form type of composition. The style is a fusion of Near Eastern ideas with medieval western and Byzantine modalities. The rhythmic structures give the impression of improvisation; although they appear at regular intervals they are syncopated with

the basic meter. The harmony consists of a very plain and simple modality which adds greatly to the overall oriental effect of the music. Melodic lines are also improvisatory in effect, due to the uneven phrases of which they are constructed. The entire work is divided into twenty-four short sections which in turn are grouped into five larger "parts": this has aptly been called a "symphony in mosaic". Among its most interesting features is the scoring: instruments are used in small groups which change with each successive section. The instruments themselves are unusual, too, and consist of tamtams, small cymbals, gongs, a vibraphone, saxophone, and the usual strings and brass. Some of the sections are polyphonic and employ the device of expertly contrived canons. Others are monodic and utilize solo instruments such as horn, trumpet, or trombone. The total effect of all these elements is quite interesting, to say the least, and shows the workings of a very unusual and highly gifted creative mind. Carlos Surinach, himself a composer of no mean talents, conducts with much skill, and his musicians apparently are first-rate. The recording is clear and well-balanced. —D. H. M.

KHACHATURIAN: *Piano Concerto in D flat*; Lev Oborin (piano) with the State Radio Orchestra of the U.S.S.R. conducted by Dimitri Kabalevsky.

KABALEVSKY: *Piano Concerto No. 3, Op. 50*; Emil Gilels (piano) with the State Radio Orchestra of the U.S.S.R. conducted by Dimitri Kabalevsky. Westminster XWN-18356, \$3.98.

(Khachaturian)

Kapell, Koussevitzky Victor LM-1006

▲**BOTH** recordings have historic value in that the respective composers conduct their own works. Of the two, Kabalevsky's is the more successful collaboration. Gilels' technical mastery and bravura style are singularly suited to this restlessly rhythmic riot of musical color. Although pleasing to the ears, the concerto is shallow in musical depth and quite short on invention. The capricious opening in a samba-like rhythm strongly suggests Kabalevsky's own Overture to *Colas Breugnon*. About midway through to the end of the work the shadow of Rachmaninov becomes increasingly apparent in use of the late master's particular brand of Russian flavoring and, in particular, in the calculated use of accelerandi built to rhythmic fortissimi at ends of movements.

Although his is a much finer work, the Khachaturian performance suffers from a pianist whose style is rather introverted and really more suited to the Classical idiom. His attempts at approximating the composer's wishes result in a forced and percussive quality. The angularity of certain transitional passages suggests that Khachaturian is not the best conductor of his own music. Despite its

age, the Kapell-Koussevitzky performance is still the one to be reckoned with. Except for a slight clanginess of piano tone and the shrillness of the higher-voiced strings at a *forte* in the Khachaturian, the sound is perhaps the best yet to come from the Soviets. —A.K.

LEES: *String Quartet No. 1*; **DENNY:** *String Quartet No. 2*; Juilliard String Quartet. Epic LC-3325, \$3.98.

▲**COMPOSER** Benjamin Lees has described his Quartet No. 1 as an attempt to communicate certain very personal emotions to the listener. The work is definitely neoromantic and quite lyrical in nature, but it seems to lack, at least for me, a certain necessary rapport. The *Adagio* is quite effective, with its expressive cello solo, although it carries more weight than the other movements. The harmonic texture is somewhat lush and only mildly dissonant. On the other hand, William Denny's composition seems to have a ripeness and maturity of expression which make it, in my opinion, an engrossing work. Denny's harmonic language also is neoromantic, but with a tinge of modality which gives an evocative and pulling quality sometimes tragic in flavor. The quartet is divided into two movements with an overall plan of "A-B-A-C-A". The "A" sections are slow, plaintive, and at times depressed—but always dignified. The "B" is a scherzo-like section utilizing syncopated rhythms and emphasizing clarity of line. The "C" is similar in mood but in sonata form. All in all, a solid work both texturally and formally. The Juilliard Quartet is thoroughly familiar with the modern idiom, and their performance is excellent, as is Epic's recording. —D.H.M.

LEONIN: *Viderunt omnes; Alleluia, epulemur in azimis; Propter veritatem; Gaude Maria; PEROTIN: Alleluia, nativitas; Sederunt principes*; Russell Oberlin (counter-tenor); Charles Bresler (tenor); Donald Perry (tenor); and Seymour Barab (viol). Experiences Anonymes EA-0021. \$4.98.

▲**IN** his notes introducing these "Notre Dame organa", William G. Waite (who is also responsible for the transcriptions used) draws an apt parallel between the music and the architecture of the famous Parisian cathedral where it came into being in the twelfth century. It strikes one while listening to the record that the first thing lacking is the kind of acoustics a performance in such a church would have. The sound here is very dry and precise. Comparisons are inevitable, too, with the two other extensive recordings of music by these old masters. Paul Boepple and the Desoff Choirs, with a background of brass, make their performance as impressively sonorous as possible, and there is no gainsaying the effectiveness of their (Concert Hall) disc, however much one may question

its musicological correctness. More recently, Deutsche Grammophon's Archive Series (released here by Decca) has given us one record side of Leonin and Perotin sung by Safford Cape's Pro Musica Antiqua of Brussels. It must be admitted that for all the earnestness and enthusiasm of the singers here, they do not succeed in conveying the essence of the music in a manner to compare with the Belgian artists. For all their best efforts, the Americans cannot overcome the impression that their selections are long drawn out. —P.L.M.

LISZT: *Piano Concerto No. 1 in E flat; Piano Concerto No. 2 in A*; Philippe Entremont with the Zurich Radio Orchestra conducted by Walter Goehr. Concert Hall CHS-1500, \$3.98.

Kempff.....London LL-1072
Foldes.....Decca DL-9888
▲YOUNG Entremont, who made such an impression among the critics and public this season in Philadelphia and elsewhere, gives us two flashy interpretations of the Liszt Piano Concertos. His large, brittle tone is ideal for this music, and he makes a most favorable impression. Wilhelm Kempff may get more of the poetry out of these war-horses, but M. Entremont brings a youthful fire and brilliance that is most appealing. He receives excellent support from the Zurich Radio Orchestra under the ubiquitous Goehr. The piano has been faithfully recorded and the balance is up to the high standard set by this company. —R.R.

MOZART: *Concerto No. 10 in E flat, K. 365, for Two Pianos and Orchestra*; **SAINT-SAËNS:** *Carnival of the Animals*; Emil Gilels and Yakov Zak (pianos) with the State Orchestra of the USSR conducted by Kiril Kondrashin (Mozart) and Kurt Eliasberg (Saint-Saëns). Monitor MC-2006, \$3.98.

(Mozart)
Haskil, Anda.....Angel 35380
Schnabels.....Epic LC-3259
(Saint-Saëns)
Slatkin.....Capitol P-8270

▲WORKS featuring two pianos have been coupled on this release. Otherwise there seems little reason for the strange mating. Gilels and Zak are excellent pianists, but they are not shown to best advantage on this release, for the sound is not up to modern standards. There is little definition between the instruments and the bass is too often muddy and indistinct. The woodwinds have that peculiar nasal quality so characteristic of Russian orchestras, but the other instrumentalists are all first rate. Shafraan plays the lovely solo part in *The Swan*. If the sound were better, it might be possible to tell a bit more about the performances. As it is, one can only hope that these will be remade under more ideal circumstances. Superior versions of each work exist in current catalogues. The Haskil-Anda version of the Mozart Concerto is among the

finest available, and the Capitol, Angel, Victor, or Urania versions of the Saint-Saëns work are to be more highly recommended. —R.R.

MOZART: *Missa brevis in D, K.194; Credo-Mass in C, K.257*; Annelore Cahnbley-Maedel (soprano); Margarete Kissel (contralto); George Maran (tenor); Walter Raninger (basso); Gertrud Schretter (contralto); Mozarteums Kammerchor and Camerata Academica des Salzburger Mozarteums, with Franz Sauer (organ), conducted by Bernhard Paumgartner. Epic LC-3323, \$3.98.

▲THE K.194 herewith reaches its second performance on LP; the K.357 seems to be a first. The former is definitely a lightweight Mass, hardly suggesting a church performance. Writing of the Grossmann recording, I found in it "Mozart at his less inspired", concluding that the work was not "performed in a manner to make it seem much better". And now I find little enough to choose between the two readings. Paumgartner, of course, has the benefit of somewhat smoother recording, but even in this the contrast is hardly striking.

The C major Mass has more life in it, a disarming gaiety and a charm its companion lacks. Its title, *Credo-Mass*, refers to the fact that in it the word "Credo" is not intoned by the priest, but set to music as part of the movement. The annotator, Klaus George Roy, points further to the important part Mozart's setting of the word plays in the development of the movement. Einstein has this to say of the Mass: "After the 'learned,' the motet-like, the galant church music of Mozart, one might speak of a song-like church music—in this instance, of a song-mass. Not that his older music lacked ideas that Mozart could have used as a connecting point; that Verdian passage in the second *Litaniae de Venerabili* was one such idea. And in fact this *Missa brevis*, this second Credo Mass, stands at the beginning of a development that was completed by Verdi's *Requiem*." Soloists, chorus and orchestra do very well by the work, and it is excellently recorded.

—P.L.M.

MOZART: *Symphony No. 25 in G minor, K.183; Symphony No. 40 in G minor, K.550*; Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Otto Klemperer. Angel 35407, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

(K.183)
Ackermann, Netherlands. Concert Hall CHS-1194
Walter, Columbia Sym.....Columbia ML-5002
Solti, London Sym.....London LL-1034
(K.550)
Walter, N. Y. Phil.....Columbia ML-4693
Toscanini, N.B.C.....Victor LM-1789
Reiner, Chicago.....Victor LM-6035

▲BEAUTIFUL orchestral playing in this intelligent coupling of the G minor twins, together for the first time on LP, but there is little else to recommend it against such

competition as Solti (in the K.183), Reiner (in the K.550), and Walter especially (in both). Although Klemperer's first movement of the "little G minor" is faster than Walter's, it is the older man's effort that has the more vigorous quality and songfulness throughout. Klemperer tends to be rather bland in dynamic contrasts, and heavy-footed in the minuet of the earlier symphony. Except for the third movement, he expounds the later work at the slowest tempi (notwithstanding contrary and clear score markings) I have ever heard, imbuing it with a curiously somber, reflective quality. Taken so slowly, however, the finale becomes vertical in line and loses its inherent spontaneity. Fine, full-bodied sound. —A.K.

MOZART: *Violin Sonatas in E minor, K.304; G, K. 301; E flat, K. 380*; Wolfgang Schneiderhan (violin) and Carl Seemann (piano). Decca DL-9886, \$3.98.

Grimiaux, Tucker.....Boston 202
▲NEATLY defined, small-scale performances, with the two later sonatas faring better than the K. 301, which is done rather mechanically and in a bloodless manner. The K. 380 rondo is particularly well played. Schneiderhan's tone tends at times to lack identification and become a bit too soberly *echt Deutsch*. Carl Seemann is an able accompanist. Good balance between the instruments. —A.K.

PALESTRINA: *Missa Papae Marcelli*; Vienna Akademie Kammerchor conducted by Günther Theuring. Westminster XWN-18364, \$3.98.

De Nobel.....Epic LC-3045
▲THERE are many ways of performing Palestrina, as witness the four recordings now available of this famous Mass. Theuring belongs to the restrained and relaxed school; his performance takes two sides as against one each for de Nobel and Grossmann. These Viennese voices are inclined to be a bit vibrant, if hardly enough to becloud the contrapuntal lines. Undoubtedly to some hearers this will be a virtue. For myself I still prefer the greater clarity of the de Nobel recording, and also that conductor's more virile approach to the music. —P.L.M.

PALESTRINA: *Le Vergine; Stabat Mater; Super flumina Babylonis*; Choir of the Choral Academy, Lecco conducted by Guido Camillucci. Vox PL-9740, \$4.98.

▲THE set of eight spiritual madrigals, with texts by Dante, each beginning with the words *La vergine*, is new to records. The *Stabat Mater* has been done by Boepple and the Dessoff Choirs, *Super flumina* by many recording groups. The present performances belong to the hearty school which seems to be prevalent in Italy; the music is rather square in effect, with the rhythms relentlessly bumped out. This

is a shame, for in the madrigal set there is endless variety and rhythmic subtlety; the patterns do not need to be pointed at us. In a word, there is not much sensitivity here, not much of the essential grandeur of Palestrina. The reproduction, however, is good, and the chorus well balanced.

—P.L.M.

PISTON: *Symphony No. 6*; **MARTINU:** *Fantasies symphoniques* (Symphony No. 6); Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Charles Munch. RCA Victor LM-2083, \$3.98.

▲FROM this recording it can easily be seen that at least two of our contemporary composers have put aside experimentalism to produce works which display confidence and solidity of style. There is a feeling of inevitability and artistic conviction in the Piston Symphony which is truly impressive. The entire work is cast in a mode of expression more notable for its Romantic richness of texture than its dissonance. The form is quite logical and easy to follow, but it does not hide the fact that this is a personal and rather emotional work. The orchestration is that of a skilled workman who uses instrumental combinations to serve his expressive needs without any fancy frills or cheap pyrotechniques. Especially effective is the sudden entrance of delicate harp and strings which gives an almost Menotti-like quality in the second theme of the first movement. The Martinu is in a different genre altogether. The form is more or less psychological, and contrasting and seemingly incompatible styles follow one upon the other. The work begins with an Impressionistic quality of fluttering woodwinds. This is quickly erased, however, and during the course of the music we hear everything from folklike melodies harmonized with conventional lushness to biting dissonances. This will be confusing until repeated hearings reveal that there is an ingenious plan of organization here which binds these styles together into an expressive whole. Both the Piston and the Martinu were, according to the composers, written for the Boston Symphony, which turns out truly excellent performances on this disc. The recording is quite good.

—D.H.M.

RACHMANINOV: *Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini*, Op. 43; **FRANCK:** *Symphonic Variations*; **DELIUS:** *Prelude to "Irmelin"*; Leon Fleisher (piano) with the Cleveland Orchestra conducted by George Szell. Epic LC-3330, \$3.98.

(Rachmaninov)
Rubinstein.....Victor LM-6039
Rachmaninov.....Victor LM-6123
(Franck)
Gieseking.....Columbia ML-4885

Badura-Skoda.....Westminster W-LAB-7030

▲FLEISHER took first place in the Belgian International Music Competition of 1952—no mean achievement—and he

has kept right on advancing in artistic maturity since then. In these high-voltage performances his admirable collaborator is Szell, who has been something of a musical father to the younger artist. Needless to say, they are of one interpretative mind. The Franck is a masterpiece of integration; the Rachmaninov less so. Although the latter is played with enviable command and security, the scurrying tempi at the outset, and also the stress laid on technical fireworks rather than depth of content in the more demanding variations, makes for less than a balanced concept. In approach, Fleisher is less sentimental than either Rubinstein or the composer himself. Interpretatively, he recalls Kapell. Rhythmically, his tendencies are toward strong accents and an almost staccato quality in articulation. Despite its faults the reading is still of superior quality, but not so much as to sway my affections from the Rubinstein-Reiner presentation. As to the Franck, on the other hand, I believe that for sheer finesse of definition and execution there isn't a performance in the LP catalogue



to equal this one. I doubt that there ever will be. Szell's accompaniments are ideal (what an orchestra he has made of this!!). Although the Delius is a strange dissonance for the other two, Szell has exquisitely caught the limpid tenderness of its haunting pastels. The piece also evokes fond memories of Antony Tudor's masterpiece, *Romeo and Juliet*, for which ballet this comprises part of the score. Remembering the bone-dry quality of sound once provided for this orchestra, the vibrant character of the present product is all the more remarkable.

—A.K.

ROSEN: *String Quartet No. 1*; **USMANSKY:** *String Quartet* (1947); New Music String Quartet. Epic LC-3333, \$3.98.

▲ONE can easily detect the influence of Bartók and Sessions in Jerome Rosen's well written Quartet. Born in Boston in 1921, Rosen took his early musical training in Pittsburgh, and later at the University of California with Sessions and William Denny. Still later he studied with Darius Milhaud on a *Prix de Paris*. He now teaches at the Davis Campus of the University of California. The comparison of Rosen's style to Bartók's

does not mean to imply that there is not an originality and sincerity of feeling in his work. I feel that Rosen is capable of using this dissonant language to convey a deeply felt and personal message. He may not have mastered the art of turning an expressive phrase as neatly as does Bartók, but his music does "speak", which is the important thing, after all.

Ilhan Usmanbas was born in 1921 in Istanbul, where he received his early training in cello. He studied composition at the Ankara State Conservatory (where he now teaches musicology), and at Tanglewood with Luigi Dallapiccola. From this background it might be suspected that his style would show Near Eastern influences. Not a trace of these, however; it is a language quite close to Hindemith. In his statement on the record jacket, Usmanbas pokes fun at this Quartet, written when he was twenty-five. There is no need for apology. Despite the fact that it is an early work it seems to me to have a strength of style and a considerable mastery of execution. The New Music Quartet gives clean and careful performances, although there is probably more intensity in this music than their playing would suggest. Epic's recording is fine in every way.

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ROSSINI-RESPIGHI: *La boutique fantasque* (complete); **IBERT:** *Divertissement*; **PISTON:** *Suite from The Incredible Flutist*; Boston Pops Orchestra conducted by Arthur Fiedler. RCA Victor LM-2084, \$3.98.

▲ALL three are works in which Fiedler has long held interpretative honors. He proves his mettle anew by delivering a rousing and yet sensitively balanced *Boutique* that would make the toes of any listening ballerina tingle. The biting, satiric *Divertissement* of Ibert, with its delicious Strauss waltz parody and Wedding March spoof, also gets no less than its full due. Piston's amusing Suite, presumably a recoupling from Victor's deluxe album entitled "Ballet" (LM-6113), is given the works. Bravo Fiedler! Peerless sound.

—A.K.

SAINT-SAËNS: *Symphony No. 3 in C minor*, Op. 78; Vienna Philharmonica Symphony conducted by Hans Swarowsky; Prof. Hans Eibner (organ). Urania LX-105, \$3.98.

Toscanini, N.B.C.....Victor LM-1874
Cluytens, Paris Cons.....Angel 35336

▲ALTHOUGH all of the recordings of this symphony now extant are at least good performances, certain versions take precedence over others. The Munch-N.Y. Philharmonic version of the forties is almost eliminated for reasons of age, though some (understandably) have a particular preference for this fine reading. The sound of the Toscanini disc will never win any laurels for RCA Victor either, but the highly dramatic presentation more than balances this. Swarow-

sky's effort, although more expansive and elastic than Toscanini's (interpretatively, it is closest to Cluytens' conception) is none the less beautifully lyric and reflective. To its great advantage is the brilliant playing by the orchestra (presumably the Vienna Philharmonic under one of its recording pseudonyms) and a sensitively balanced engineering job worthy of high praise. Urania may take a deep bow.

—A.K.

SCHUBERT: *Dem Unendlichen; Der Erbkönig; Am Grabe Anselmos; Des Mädchens Klage; Ave Maria; SCHUMANN:* *Der Nussbaum; Die Soldatenbraut; Meine Rose; Liebeslied; Sie Lotosblume; Widmung; Erstes Grün; In der Fremde;* Kirsten Flagstad (soprano); Edwin McArthur (piano). London LL-1546, \$3.98.

▲THERE is something unutterably tragic in the sound of the Flagstad voice in these songs, and something very sad about the performances. Flagstad was never a subtle singer—she never needed to be—consequently she never quite belonged in the company of the great lieder singers, however magnificent her tones. Now that the tones no longer flow out as easily as once they did, her musically understanding of the songs and her still admirable diction are not enough to make the difference. Most of the lieder she has chosen are on the broad and/or sombre side, but even the lightest of them sound almost poignant in their expression. Perhaps her pianist-collaborator could have helped her more in *Dem Unendlichen*, whose flowing melody is sung too slowly, and *Erbkönig*, which is rather placid and matter-of-fact. The voice itself holds up quite well, except in the *Ave Maria*, which costs her a real effort. One misses the give and take between voice and piano in such dreamy bits as Schumann's *Nussbaum* and *Meine Rose*, and one wonders if the singer has read the direction at the head of *Die Soldatenbraut*—"Leicht, herzlich." The jacket carries some of the least helpful notes seen in recent months. —P.L.M.

SCHULLER: *Symphony for Brass and Percussion;* **JOHNSON:** *Poem for Brass;* **LEWIS:** *Three Little Feelings;* **GIUFFRÉ:** *Pharaoh;* Brass Ensemble of the Jazz and Classical Music Society conducted by Dimitri Mitropoulos. Columbia CL-941, \$3.98.

▲THE "Jazz and Classical Music Society", newly organized, includes recruits from both sides of the invisible fence that separates "popular" and "serious" music. Its intentions are equally catholic, although the emphasis will be on contemporary works. Gunther Schuller's *Symphony*, otherwise known as the music for José Limón's dance work, "The Traitor", effectively dispels the misconception that twelve-tone music is by nature unmelodic. This composition also shows the steady hand of a richly imaginative and

thoroughly competent craftsman. Music for brass is inherently exciting, but Schuller has woven a structure of sound that vividly demonstrates the range of expressive nuance available to this instrumental family. Indeed, the texture is so self-contained as to obviate any need for strings and woodwinds. Schuller's own virtuosity—he is first horn at the Metropolitan Opera—is an insurance of idiomatic writing and, incidentally, of high performance quality here, for all the players involved are of the same order of excellence. The overside offerings are thoughtful, unpretentious examples of the modern jazz idiom. Withal, the disc wears well; each hearing brings new surprises. Recommended in whole or in part, depending on the listener's tastes. The sound *per se* is fine throughout. And incidentally, a word of praise for Maestro Mitropoulos for lending his prestige to this enterprise. The twelve-tone school enjoys no more persuasive advocacy.

—T.S.M.

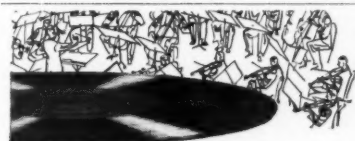
J. STRAUSS: *Fledermaus Overture; Fledermaus Suite* (arr. Ormandy); *Thousand and One Nights Waltz*, Op. 346; **JOS. STRAUSS:** *Music of the Spheres Waltzes*, Op. 235; *Sword and Lyre Waltz*, Op. 71. Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia ML-5166, \$3.98.

▲INTRODUCING Eugene Ormandy and his 2,000 violins! The delivery and tone here are so suave and lush that the record almost drools. Being a master craftsman, however, Ormandy well knows how to mold the over-sumptuous sound into stirring performances just within the bounds of good taste. Less attractive is his arrangement of the excerpts from *Fledermaus*, in which vocal parts are assigned to the solo instrumentalists. It consists of the Introduction and Finale of Act I, the *Tick-Tack Polka* (I'd almost forgotten where *See what the boys in the back room will have come from*), *Adele Mein Herr Marquis* ("Look me over once, look me over twice..."), and the waltz finale of Act II. The remaining *Thousand and One Nights* and *Fledermaus Overture* (played with hair-raising precision), as well as brother Josef's *Music of the Spheres* and the *Sword and Lyre Waltz*, are given readings of delicious lilt and abandon. Big, enveloping sound. —A.K.

R. STRAUSS: *Salome—Closing Scene;* **BEETHOVEN:** *Ah, perfido!*; **WEBER:** *Oberon—Ozean! du Ungeheuer!*; Inge Borkh (soprano) with Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Josef Krips. London LL-1536, \$3.98.

▲LIKE Christel Goltz, her immediate predecessor in the royal line of Salomes, Miss Borkh has not been content to record her bit scene once. It would be interesting to know just when this recording was made in relation to her Victor version with Reiner and the Chicago Symphony. A

comparison of the performances is most curious. Certainly the voice is fresher and steadier here, but it is less well balanced with the orchestra and, though Krips does his part well enough, the music remains very much the possession of Fritz Reiner. Like every other Salome, Borkh finds it difficult to make some of the words stand out clearly over the full orchestra, but she gets some fine subtle coloring into certain phrases. Not so downright bitchy (the only word I know for it) as Ljuba Welitch, Borkh is still very much a character. She has one questionable habit of breaking long phrases a little too obviously, which is more noticeable here than in her performance with Reiner. On the other hand, one of her most effective monuments is the low passage, *Das Geheimnis des Todes*, which she treated quite differently in Chicago. The lines of Herod and Herodias are as usual omitted. Unfortunately, Miss Borkh is not at home in either the long lines of Beethoven's *scena* nor in the Italian language. Strangely, we have yet to hear a wholly satisfactory performance of this piece on LP, as the estimable pre-war Flagstad recording has not been revived. Schwarzkopf treats the big dramatic music as if it were an intimate lied; Joan Hammond (whose British recording has not been released here) is closer to the style, but no match for Flagstad. Borkh is much better in the *Oberon*; her feeling is right. One still wishes for a more solid tonal core. —P.L.M.



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STRAVINSKY: *Le sacre du printemps*; Orchestra of the Paris Conservatory conducted by Pierre Monteux. Victor LM-2085, \$3.98.

Monteux, Boston.....Victor LM-1149
Stravinsky, N. Y. Phil.....Columbia ML-4882
▲ANY new recording by Monteux is eagerly anticipated. The imminence of his second *Sacre*, whose riot-rocked premiere he conducted, held special promise. But in all truth, the newer effort isn't quite as effective as his older version with the Boston Symphony. Technically, the Parisians are no match for the American ensemble and cannot begin to equal them in definition of detail and precision of execution. Tempo-wise the present performance is slower, from the opening introduction and *Dance of the Youths and Maidens* straight through. The difference of quality between the two orchestras becomes particularly apparent in the *Spring Rounds*, where one misses the exhilarating bite of the Boston brass section, and again in the woodwind passages of the introduction to *The Sacrifice*. Not that the release is without its merits (this is, after all, Monteux). It boasts a hair-raising *Dance to the Glorified One*, and orchestral blendings of spine-tingling eeriness in the introduction to part two. Indeed, *The Sacrifice* almost equals the former recording. The annotation space is given over to Monteux' own account of his first hearing (with Diaghilev) of the score as played by Stravinsky at the piano, and of the tumultuous first performance. Rosseau's "The Snake Charmer" makes a wonderfully apt and evocative cover. The sound is all that one could ask. —A.K.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Symphony No. 1 in G Minor, Op. 13* ("Winter Dreams"); Vienna Philharmonica Symphony conducted by Hans Swarowsky. Urania UR-8008, \$3.98.

Golovanov.....West. XWN-18224
▲IN comparison with Tchaikovsky's later symphonies this one contains relatively sunny and happy music. That is not to say there is no dramatic intensity here—there is. But such moments seem to disclose a healthier state of mind than was later revealed; there is almost no introspective breast-beating. Another fault which plagued many of Tchaikovsky's earlier works was an inclination toward endless repetition of phrases; I am happy to report that such is not the case with this work. In fact, the style here seems to me quite close to Dvorak. The "Philharmonica" is of course not the Vienna Philharmonic—at least not exactly—but it is quite good nevertheless, and Swarowsky seems to handle it, as well as the music, very well. The recording is certainly one of Urania's best; especially fine is the sound of the basses in the beginning of the first movement. There is a good solid string tone with almost no boominess. One caution, how-

ever: This record will have to be treated like a baby, for it is pressed from transparent red "virgin vinylite" and is, I find, extremely sensitive to nicks and scratches. The Golovanov performance is fine musically, but in recorded sound does not measure up to this one. Compliments to Urania and especially to its engineers. —D.H.M.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Symphony No. 6 in B minor, Op. 74*; L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande conducted by Ernest Ansermet. London LL-1633, \$3.98.

Phila., Ormandy.....Columbia ML 4544
Leningrad, Mravinsky.....Decca DL-9885
▲ANSERMET conveys no sense of identification with this music. What he offers is a rather tame, impersonal *Pathétique*, devoid of any real feeling. He includes the liberties usually found in the more dramatic expositions, but lacks the nuance and finesse to offset them. Notably good sound. —A.K.

VERDI: *Aida*; Herva Nelli (Aida); Eva Gustavson (Amneris); Richard Tucker (Rhadames); Giuseppe Valdengo (Amonasro); Norman Scott (Ramfis); Dennis Harbour (King); Teresa Stich-Randall (Priestess); Virginio Assandri (Messenger); Robert Shaw Chorus and NBC Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Arturo Toscanini. RCA Victor set LM-6132, 3 discs, \$11.94.

▲AS pointed out in the various illuminating essays in the libretto booklet accompanying this set, *Aida* played a particularly important part in the career of Arturo Toscanini. It was with *Aida* that he made his historic surprise debut as a conductor in Brazil in 1886 and it was again this opera that introduced him to New York and the Metropolitan in 1908. To cut the story short, this recording, made from his broadcasts of 26 March and 2 April, 1949, now must stand as his last operatic recording. Since the Maestro is no longer with us, the set takes on a special sentimental value, but it is most important as a document. Toscanini was the last great link between Verdi himself and the present generation. Certain things happen in the performance which are not justified by the printed score, but we are assured (and certainly little such assurance is really needed) that the Maestro had his sanction direct from the composer. So much for those who have maintained that Toscanini gave us only the printed notes! The most notable example of this is the ending of *Celeste Aida*, which Tucker does not sing "pp—morendo" as the score directs, but which is given full voice as by most tenors, but with a repetition of the final words an octave lower.

There is no point in comparing this *Aida* with others on records; it is too much Toscanini's show. Sonically it is hardly comparable with the best competition, nor will the singers stand up under such

comparison. A couple of passages were rerecorded long after the broadcast, with resulting unevenness not only in acoustics, but in the quality of singing. Best of the cast are Valdengo, who sings richly and with authority, though he hardly exhausts the possibilities of his role, and Tucker, who is an unusually lyrical Rhadames. Both Nelli and Gustavson sing rather dryly, the former sounding her best in the forementioned "retakes." Orchestra and chorus are, as was customary, superb. —P.L.M.

VIVALDI: *Concerto in G for Two Mandolins and Orchestra*; *Concertos in C and Concerto in A minor for Piccolo and Orchestra*; Boniface Bianchi and Bruno Guerciotti (mandolins), Bruno Martinotti (piccolo), with the Orchestra Accademia dell'Orso conducted by Newell Jenkins. Period SPL-733, \$4.98.

▲FOUR interesting Vivaldi concertos are contained on this record. The *G major Concerto* for two mandolins and orchestra (F. V, 2 or P. 133) is scored for a rather unusual combination of instruments. Mr. Jenkins has supplied the harpsichord continuo that was omitted in the published Ricordi edition. The other concertos, two in C major (F. VI, 4 or P. 79 and F. VI, 5 or P. 78) and one in A minor (F. VI, 9 or P. 83) are for piccolo and orchestra. These have the characteristic Vivaldi melodies and harmonies and these are charmingly set forth by the soloists, who, incidentally, are not mentioned on the face of the record sleeve. The notes say that these works are not published. If the annotator had taken the trouble, he would have found that, on the contrary, all are available in the Ricordi edition, identified by the Fanna numbers above. The recorded sound is excellent throughout, so the release may be unqualifiedly recommended. It is a pity, though, that more care was not taken in the presentation of the finished product (i.e. the notes and the jacket). —R.R.

A WEEK prior to the copy deadline for this issue it became apparent that we would be inaugurating our tape section later than expected—probably in June. The explanation is simply that certain labels were unable to get review copies to us in time and it seemed only fair to hold up until we could begin our coverage with a really representative sampling. Also, truth to tell, two of our reviewers had not quite completed their stereo installations at press time. And what with Mercury and Phonotapes just about to join the stereo parade along with RCA Victor, Sonotape, Concertapes, and all the brave little independents, it would hardly do to undertake the job we have in mind without allowing a while to convert our ears as well as our monaural rigs. —J.L.

"Unlikely Corners"

WHY NOT LOOK below the surface occasionally and find out what it is in the direct appeal of the popular tune which makes the audience go home whistling; to see if there is not some artistic impulse hidden in unlikely corners. . .

—Ralph Vaughan Williams

▲In commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of George Gershwin's death, M-G-M has handsomely packaged all the "serious" works as **The Music of George Gershwin** (M-G-M set 3EL), the most comprehensive collection of its kind available.

Gershwin's contribution to our music is a substantial and considerable one. In his lifetime, which lasted but 38 years, though he was much praised and adored he was misunderstood enough not to be taken as seriously (or sincerely) as he deserved. As he sat at the piano playing his own works (of course!), Gershwin would muse, "I wonder if my music will be played a hundred years from now?" To which some wag, Woolcott perhaps, retorted, "Yes, George, if you're around to play it." It is our loss that George is not around—and the hundred years is not yet, but if the growth of his music's popularity here and abroad, plus its ineffable staying power, is any indication, it will be played a century hence, and longer.

M-G-M's album, in a fashion, is proof of this. Though the soloist, pianist Sondra Bianca, is American, the orchestra and conductor, Hans-Jürgen Walthers, are German. (The recordings—three 12-inches, by the way—were the result of a concert tour in Germany featuring Gershwin's music; according to reports it was extraordinarily successful). If Gershwin's music is to meet the test of time it must be played by other than Gershwin specialists; the music must stand on its own and not interpretations by those who supposedly knew Gershwin. It is gratifying that these works are performed so well and not, indeed, perfunctorily as is too often the practice of those who have played them so frequently. The approach by soloist and orchestra (which sometimes encounters difficulties in the rhythmic subtleties and tempos—but no matter) endows the performances with a freshness that even Gershwin buffs should find interesting.

For the to-be-envied new discoverer of the wonderful world of Gershwin this is an ideal set, for here are the *Rhapsody in Blue*, the *Concerto in F*, the *Piano Preludes*, *An American in Paris*, plus the unappreciated but excellent *Second Rhapsody*, the *Cuban Overture*, the brilliant *Variations on "I Got Rhythm"*, and a symphonic suite from *Porgy and Bess*. (Instead of the latter, of which there is no shortage, it might have been an idea to include the early one-act opera *135th Street*, this being the only ambitious work, albeit one of obvious immaturity and hasty preparation, not recorded).

"There is only one important thing in music and that is ideas and feeling," Gershwin once said in a statement that may lack semantic precision, but evidences no lack of intelligence in concept and self-appraisal. Gershwin's imagination brimmed with ideas governed only by his feeling; even critics who had trouble with Gershwin's cavalier attitude toward strict form conceded him this touch of genius. The *Concerto in F* is really pretty solid musical fare, whether taken as a portrait of a city or as pure music. The *Second Rhapsody* contains a multitude of ideas which Gershwin developed more ingeniously than in any previous work. The *Variations on "I Got Rhythm"* is probably Gershwin's least known large scale composition, yet he thought enough of it to dedicate it to his brother-lyricist Ira. In this captivating charmer Gershwin displays his inventive way with idea

upon idea woven around a single theme. Is this serious music? Will it live a hundred years from now? Ultimately these are meaningless questions.

What is important is that this is American music of stature produced by one of our brightest musical talents who, in just one year over a decade—from the *Rhapsody in Blue* of 1924 to *Porgy and Bess* of 1935—produced a remarkable and treasureable body of work (and don't forget the superlative show scores also) in all too brief a time. *The Music of George Gershwin* refreshingly takes Gershwin's greatness for granted in every way: the packaging, comprehensiveness of presentation, and in the always acceptable and sometimes outstanding interpretations. Who could ask for more?



For Gershwinites there is more this month: the superb sound-track recording from the excellent film, *Funny Face* (Verve MG-15001), which utilizes five of the Gershwin songs from the original musical, plus *Clap Yo' Hands* from *Oh Kay*.

George and Ira Gershwin concocted a superior score for 1927's *Funny Face*, which starred Fred and Adele Astaire. Happily, Fred Astaire also stars in the film, singing many of the songs he sang thirty years ago. Neither he nor the songs have aged in the interim. The only reservation is that not enough of the original Gershwin songs were used. Instead some adequate though not particularly inspired numbers were written by Rodger Edens (music) and Leonard Gershe (lyrics). The latter also saw fit to tamper a bit with the fine Ira Gershwin lyrics—an act of unrequited though no doubt well-intentioned vandalism. A case of sending a boy to do a man's job. Though Ira Gershwin, complete gentleman that he is, would not complain (nor was he asked to revise the lyrics), there is one Gershwin lyric admirer who, should he chance to meet Mr. Gershe in the street, would be mightily tempted to cane the whippersnapper.

Still, Verve's beautifully produced album contains all the songs, plus a good deal of the instrumental music, the former delectably interpreted by Fred Astaire, Audrey Hepburn, and Kay Thompson.

So we have such choice Gershwin lieder as *Funny Face*, *He Loves And She Loves*, and *Let's Kiss And Make Up* chanted by Astaire; *How Long Has This Been Going On?* captivantly recited (you really can't call it singing) by Audrey Hepburn; *Clap Yo' Hands* by Astaire and Kay Thompson (really a visual number that doesn't come off on the record); and *S'Wonderful* by Astaire and Hepburn.

Hoagy Carmichael may be better known for

his characterizations in the movies—often singing his own songs—or as a TV performer, than he is as the composer of "Stardust" and other, shall we say, stellar melodies. He is given due honors and fine treatment in an album titled **"Heart and Soul—The Music of Hoagy Carmichael"**, a collection of a dozen songs tastefully sung by young British singer Alan Dean accompanied by Robert Maxwell, his harp and orchestra (M-G-M E-3461). Dean is generally pushed as the "English Sinatra" (who no doubt he has heard and admires), but he may also invoke pleasant memories of the late Buddy Clark. His singing, whatever the influences, is sensitive, intelligent, and stylish. Maxwell's accompaniment is imaginative and discreet throughout.

A goodly slice of the Carmichael catalog (with emphasis on the ballads) is included. Besides the inevitable *Stardust*, there are also *I Get Along Without You Very Well*, *Blue Orchids*, *The Nearness of You*, *Heart and Soul*, and *One Morning in May*, in the "almost art song" category. For rhythmic interest we have the spicy *How Little We Know* (originally sung by Lauren Bacall), *My Resistance is Low*, and *Judy*. Possibly Carmichael's musical personality isn't as individual as that of the better known composers, but his style isn't as immediately striking as, say, Harold Arlen's or Cole Porter's. Still, Carmichael's output, judged merely by this album alone, is an important one and his gift for melody highly developed. Listen to the exquisite *I Get Along Without You Very Well* (sung better here than any other recording I know, including Sinatra's); here is American popular song writing elevated to an art.

Hugh Martin and Ralph Blane are their own interpreters in the first album that gives them some unaccountably delayed, long deserved, attention in **Martin & Blane** (Harlequin Records HQ-701). It is not cricket to judge song writers by the same standards we might other vocalists—in fact, it has always seemed to me that we should be happy to have their personal interpretations before the song stylists get at them and hole them up. Nor would it be sensible to compare Martin and Blane; each is endowed with a good singing voice with his own personal touch.

Neither Martin nor Blane will say who supplies what in their songs; they divide the credits for words and music. They have worked independently, however, Hugh Martin supplying both music and lyrics for two shows (*Look, Ma, I'm Dancin'* and *Make a Wish*); Ralph Blane collaborated with Harold Arlen on the lyrics of films like *My Blue Heaven* and *Down Among the Sheltering Palms*. The first Martin and Blane collaboration was—and still is—one of the best musicals of our lyric stage, *Best Foot Forward* (1941). From this last, the present album presents *That's How I Love the Blues*, *Buckle Down, Winsome*, and the ever lovely *Ev'ry Time*. From the film version, *Wish I May, Wish I Might* is included. An outstanding film musical, *Meet Me In St. Louis*, also had a fine Martin and Blane score: *Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas*, *The Trolley Song* and the wistful *The Boy Next Door*. Individual songs include one of their best: *Lose*, the popular *Pass The Peace Pipe* (this last from the film *Good News*, written in collaboration with Roger Edens), and a rhythm number, *Connecticut*, written during the composers' Army stint. To bring the collection up to date, two recent movie scores are represented by *Venezia* from *Athena* and *An Occasional Man* from *The Girl Rush*. In readiness for early Broadway production is *Three Tigers for Tessie*, which may be an improvement upon the Broadway musical scene after such as *Happy Hunting*, *Bells Are Ringing*, and *Lil' Abner*.

This album of Martin and Blane songs is lavishly produced. Besides the singing of the composers, there is also a large band conducted by Ralph Burns and a vocal group called The Martins; Gwen Harmon is heard in *An Occasional Man*; all other singing is handled by Martin or Blane, with occasional backing by The Martins. This is a worthy project which brings honor to all concerned. More importantly, it brings overdue honors to the considerable talents of Hugh Martin and Ralph Blane.

—E. J.



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